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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: Amman Hosting Regional Conference on Investigative Journalism

¶1. Well known Jordanian journalist Rana Sabbagh, the Executive Director of Arab Reporters for Investigative Journalism (ARIJ), is organizing a regional conference November 28 - 30 on investigative journalism which is scheduled to include big name media figures such as Yusri Foda of Al Jazeera and Tim Sebastien of the BBC. PA Amman will explore supporting this conference by funding the participation of an American award-winning investigative reporter, Mark Hunter, currently based at INSEAD outside of Paris.

¶2. ARIJ is an Amman-based, regional media support network that seeks to encourage independent quality professional journalism through training and funding in-depth journalism projects. An independent, non-profit organization, ARIJ is funded by the Danish Parliament under a two-year program (2007-2009). They have been training young Jordanian, Syrian and Lebanese journalists in how to research and write investigative stories.

¶3. While the media in Jordan exercise some self-censorship and respect red lines imposed by the government, there is still room for good investigative journalism dealing with topics such as the availability of good medical care in rural areas, or the use of scarce water resources. Post believes ARIJ, along with the opening next year of Princess Reem's Jordan Media Institute, will help younger journalists to do more professional and in depth reporting on issues of most concern to local readers.

Beecroft